We return to the hotel, where we find Valery Larbaud, just arrived from Vichy, and we spend the evening with him.

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The funeral takes place Friday morning at ten o'clock. No other friend has come; yes, Guillaumin, the author of *La Vie dun simple;*[10] he lives on a farm thirteen kilometers from here. We still "hope" for a quarter of an hour more; Cerilly lies between several railroad lines and can be reached from several different directions. Finally the short procession starts moving.

Small gray and brown romanesque church, filled with shadow and sound counsel. The deacon comes toward us where we remain grouped around the coffin:

"This way, gentlemen! Come this way, where we have a big fire/*

And we approach a brazier near the apse. Twice during the ceremony the brother-in-law comes toward us; the first time to tell us that Marcel Ray has just arrived from Montpellier with his wife; then, the second time, leaning toward us:

"You should visit the Chapel of the Saints; my brother-in-law spoke of that too in his books."

The ceremony ends; we walk toward the cemetery. The sky is overcast. Occasionally a low moving cloud befogs the distant landscape. Here is the open grave. On the other side of the grave, opposite me, I watch the sobbing sister, who is being supported. Is it really Philippe that we are burying? What lugubrious comedy are we playing here? A village friend, decorated with lavender ribbon,[11] a shopkeeper or functionary of Cerilly, steps forward with some manuscript pages in his hand and begins his speech. He speaks of Philippe's shortness, of his unimpressive appearance, which prevented him from attaining honors, of his successive failures in the posts he would have liked

to hold: *TTou were perhaps not a great writer," he concludes, "but . . /* Nothing could be more stirring than this naive reflection of the modesty Philippe always showed in speaking of himself, by which this excellent man was doubtless taken in. But some of us feel our hearts wrung; I hear some-one whisper near me: "He's making a failure out of him!" And I hesitate a moment to step up before the grave and say that only Cerilly could speak so humbly o£ Philippe; that, seen from Paris, Philippe's stature seems to us very great. , . . But, alas, wouldn't Philippe suffer from

[10] *The Life of a Simple Man.*

[11] The insigne of the Palmes Acad&niques, a minor distinction awarded by the state.